

The Sunday-School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR NOVEMBER 1.

Subject: Absalom Rebels Against David, 2 Sam. 15—Golden Text, Ex. 20:12—Commit Verses 5, 6—Read 2 Sam. Chs. 13, 16.

TIME.—1026-1022 B. C. PLACE.—Jerusalem.

EXPOSITION.—I. Absalom's Intriguing, 1-6. An appropriate Golden Text for this lesson would be Gal. 6:7. David was simply reaping what he had sown. Though God had fully forgiven David's sin, David did not on that account escape the natural consequences of his sin. God had told him at the time that the sword should never depart from his house, and that he would raise up evil for him out of his own house (2 Sam. 12:9-12). Seven years had elapsed since David's sin. David's daughter had been dishonored, one son had been murdered, and another was the murderer. Absalom had only been embittered by his banishment from the king's presence, and his restoration to favor had not helped matters in the least. He was one of those incorrigibles that is helped by neither severity nor by kindness, a thoroughly self-centered man. Brilliant but without character, a far more dangerous and despicable man than the ordinary desperado. Absalom's first step in announcing himself as a candidate to the throne was by riding in a state that David himself did not affect (cf. 1 K. 1:33 and 1:5). It was expressly forbidden by God (De. 17:16; 1 Sam. 8:11). Many would be pleased by Absalom's departure from the simplicity of his father. Absalom displayed diligence in seeking to steal his father's throne. So did Christ's enemies in their plots against Him (Matt. 27:1). There is no one more diligent than the devil. The Hebrew of v. 2 indicates that Absalom "was of rising early." It is if Christians were as waking the throne that them. Absalom sought the discontented, the

usual practice of politicians. Indeed, all the methods of Absalom are much in vogue to-day. He utterly misrepresented the facts about his father's administration (cf. ch. 8:15). He was guilty of three sins, of (1) Not honoring his father (Ex. 20:12). (2) Sneaking evil of the ruler of his people (Acts 23:5; Ex. 22:28). (3) Bearing false witness (Ex. 20:16). These are all common sins to-day. Absalom deftly suggested that if only he were in power everything would be all right. In earlier days David had been a man of genial spirit, but in later days he seems to have drawn into his shell. Perhaps the memory of his sin and its consequences was responsible for this. Absalom practiced his art on "all that came to the king for judgment." He succeeded for the time, he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel." But it was David himself who had undermined the power of law and loyalty in the kingdom. He had opened the way for the people to transfer their affections to another by himself stealing the heart of another man's wife. Any man that commits the sin that David did is sure to lose men's esteem.

II. Absalom's Conspiracy, 7-12. It may be that the forty years of v. 7 refers to the years of David's reign, but it is more likely that it should read "four" (see R. V. Marg.) and refers to the years of Absalom's intriguing. If Absalom had made such a vow as he pretended (vs. 7, 8) he had been at least six years indifferent to it. Quite strange that he should wake up to it so suddenly. Many men wake up to their religious obligations when they have some end to gain by doing so. David seems to have lost his grip, or he would have suspected something in the light of what was going on. Nothing so soon robs a man of his grasp of practical affairs as the entrance of sin into his life. It is not likely that Absalom had ever made such a vow. If he had he had not kept it, and he was not keeping it now. Absalom next hired some shooters and trumpeters. This, too, is a favorite method of modern politicians. The mass of men are quite easily carried by a hurrah. Even Biblical critics sometimes adopt the same methods. He chose Hebron as the centre of operations because of its sacred memories (ch. 2:1, 11; 3:2, 3; 5:5). Absalom tried to make it appear that all the best men were on his side, by taking with him 200 who had no knowledge of what was going on. It is always wise when one gets invitations from such men as Absalom to look into them before accepting them. Many a foolish one is caught in this way. Ahithophel was Absalom's chief adviser. The woman whom David had wronged was his grand-daughter (ch. 11:3; cf. ch. 23:34). David felt no other deflection so keenly as his (Ps. 41:9; 55:12-14). But again he was reaping only what he had sowed. Absalom, like many another unmitigated scoundrel, observed carefully outward religious rites (v. 1; cf. Nu. 23:1-14, 30, 1 K. 21:9-12). "The conspiracy was strong" Absalom's followers were continually increasing. The people were saying of David, "There is no help for him in God" (Ps. 3:1, 2). But David was not forsaken of God even in this darkest hour (Ps. 3:8). Absalom had left God out in all his calculations; so utter failure came of all his matchless cunning and seeming promise. Absalom himself was to blame for his own ruin. But was not David to blame, too?

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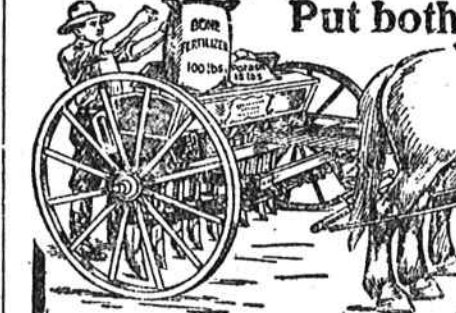
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Trust in the Lord.
Sometimes men are dissatisfied with their work and with the positions they occupy. They think they are not appreciated, and that they are competent to fill what they regard as much more important positions. This may sometimes be true; but if such persons are faithful in the positions they occupy, their worth will be recognized, and they will be called to such positions as they are found competent to fill. But a man of real worth may be successful in one position, to which he is adapted, while he would be a total failure in another to which his talents are not suited. Men are not always the best judges of their own abilities, or of the positions which they are best qualified to fill. It is always better for the place to seek the man than for the man to seek the place. Modesty is generally an evidence of worth, while presumption is almost invariably an evidence of shallowness or unreliability. If a man has but a small field, let him cultivate it well; when it becomes too small for him others will perceive it; and he will be called to more extensive labors. A man who is always laboring to do good will succeed; while a man who is always seeking for place will fail.
If one believes that he is in God's hands and engaged in God's work, why should he not so commit himself to God's will as to allow God to put him forward. Does he fear that God may neglect him and allow some one to supplant him? This is a most unworthy view of God, and ought never to be entertained by one who believes himself called of God and living in communion with Him. The meek are to inherit the earth, according to the Saviour's teaching, and he illustrated it in his own life. "Commit thy way to him and he shall bring it to pass," says one whose experience taught him lessons by which we may profit. The trouble with most persons is, they want to choose their own way and are unwilling that God should lead them.—Methodist Recorder.

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